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SUBJECT: CODEL PELOSI'S MEETING WITH SHANGHAI CATHOLIC BISHOP JIN,
MAY 24, 2009

¶1. (U) Summary. Shanghai Catholic Bishop Jin welcomed Speaker Pelosi and her delegation in their first meeting following arrival in China on May 24, and proclaimed himself to be satisfied with the degree of religious freedom now existing in China. He praised President Obama's May commencement speech at Notre Dame for its open-mindedness and asked that his best wishes and a book about the Diocese of Shanghai be presented to the President. Despite technological advances hastening transportation and communication, prejudice, misunderstanding and media manipulation can keep people distant from each other, the Bishop cautioned. The Diocese of Shanghai operates a publishing house and social welfare center, and has built primary schools in rural areas and contributed to Sichuan earthquake reconstruction areas. Two seminaries in the diocese have formed more than 400 young priests. The Pope's 2007 letter to the Catholic Church in China had been widely embraced, though not by all in the underground Catholic Church in China. Faith sustained the Bishop through 27 years of imprisonment. The Bishop expressed great admiration for the American people and for the Catholic Church in the United States which has so generously assisted the Diocese of Shanghai. End summary.

¶2. (U) 93-year-old Bishop Aloysius Jin welcomed Speaker Pelosi and delegation at an hour-long meeting in his quarters near St. Ignatius Cathedral. He good-naturedly deflected a last-moment attempt by the Shanghai Religious Affairs Bureau to reverse earlier plans and conduct the meeting in Mandarin, noting that as a native of Shanghai's Pudong, his 'Putonghua' (national Mandarin dialect) was actually a 'Pudong hua' that would be very difficult to understand and interpret. Recalling that his first trip to Europe in his youth took 33 days by ship one-way, he noted that modern technological advances had lessened the time required to travel great lengths to mere hours, as the Speaker and her delegation had just demonstrated in their travel from Washington to Shanghai. He cautioned, however, that the distances of separation between persons that arise from misunderstanding, prejudice or even manipulation of mass media still remain quite long. He encouraged the Speaker and delegation to look at China firsthand.

¶3. (U) The Bishop noted that he was born in 1916 and entered the Jesuits in 1938. Ordained in 1945, he went to Europe for further study in 1946, eventually receiving a doctorate degree in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome. He returned to China in 1951. Omitting reference to his long imprisonment, the Bishop explained that he was ordained Bishop of Shanghai in

1984 without the concurrence of the Pope. (Note: The Patriotic Catholic Association established under Communist rule to self-govern Catholics in China has selected bishops, a power reserved to the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church. End note.) However, when visiting Boston in 1994 and staying at Cardinal Law's residence, Pope John Paul II sent a prefect from Rome who spoke with the Bishop at Cardinal Law's residence for two days, after which the Pope granted his recognition of Bishop Jin as the Roman Catholic Bishop of Shanghai. Pope John Paul II also sent a Cardinal to meet with Bishop Jin in Munich during his 1996 visit there to discuss selection of Bishop Jin's successor. Presenting a bilingual book, 'Catholic Shanghai Diocese,' to the Speaker and delegation, Bishop Jin pointed out that the first photo in the front of the book is one of Pope Benedict, another sign that the Diocese of Shanghai is in full communion with the Holy See. Cardinal Wetter from Munich had relayed greetings from Pope Benedict when visiting Shanghai in 2008.

¶4. (U) Bishop Jin expressed great admiration for the United States and American people, recalling fondly his eight visits to the United States. Teachers from the California Province of the Jesuits had played important roles in his religious education, and he had read widely about the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. In his several trips to the United States, he had had opportunity to visit many Catholic universities, and recited a long list of specifically Jesuit stateside universities he had visited, including Loyola in Chicago, Fordham, Boston College, Georgetown, Gonzaga and the University of San Francisco. He expressed admiration for former Baltimore Archbishop Gibbons and noted that he had visited Cardinal Keeler in Baltimore.

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President Obama at Notre Dame.

¶5. (U) Bishop Jin added that because of heart disease, he is unable to travel anymore. Indeed, he said, as a 93-year-old, his remaining time in this life is very short. His successor has already been identified: Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Xing (Xing Wenzhi), appointed by the Pope in 2005. Bishop Jin repeated his welcome to the Speaker and delegation and urged them to visit China again. He concluded his opening remarks by saying he had followed President Obama's speech at Notre Dame's commencement one week earlier with considerable interest and approval. President Obama's speech was wonderful and the President a very open-minded man. He asked that the Speaker relay his warm regards and admiration, and a copy of 'Catholic Shanghai Diocese,' to the President. The Bishop added that he counted former Notre Dame president Father Hesburgh among his friends, having met him in 1986 and having translated his book, 'God, Country and Notre Dame,' into Chinese.

¶6. (U) Speaker Pelosi expressed her thanks for the Bishop's welcome, said she would pass the book to President Obama and introduced her delegation. The delegation was excited to visit China and thanked National People's Congress Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman (and former Ambassador to the United States and former Minister of Foreign Affairs) Li Zhaoxing for inviting the group to visit China. She welcomed Ambassador Li's presence at the meeting and that of current Chinese Ambassador to the United States Zhou Wenzhong. She congratulated Bishop Xing on his elevation and selection to succeed Bishop Jin and welcomed participation in the meeting by Shanghai Diocese Vicar General Father Ai Zuzhang and the presence of . Noting she was a native of Baltimore, she recalled that Archbishop Gibbons had been regarded as a hero by her family, and said she would relay Bishop Jin's warm words about Cardinal Keeler to the Cardinal. She relayed Cardinal McCarrick's good wishes to Bishop Jin. Bishop Jin said he had and Cardinal McCarrick had exchanged visits, beginning when the latter was Bishop of Newark. Speaker Pelosi noted Bishop Jin's path from ordination to elevation to Bishop to recognition by Rome had encountered many obstacles and

invited his comments on that aspect of his life. The Bishop demurred, saying the Speaker and Members in her delegation were all very important people, it would be better to answer specific questions rather than letting an old man tell his story. He underscored that the delegation's call on him was a great honor for the Diocese of Shanghai.

17. (U) The Speaker noted current press reports that Pope Benedict plans a second letter to the Catholic Church in China, following up on his letter of 2007. She also noted that May 24 -- the very day of this meeting with Bishop Jin -- had been declared by the Pope as a day for all Catholics to pray for the Catholic Church in China. Bishop Jin called this a happy coincidence. The Pope's letter of two years ago was a wonderful letter, clarifying that there is only one Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church, in China, not two. That division had arisen between the 'official' Chinese Church and the underground Catholic Church is a pity, the Bishop said. The Pope's 2007 letter encouraged reconciliation and mutual pardon by the two Catholic factions. The Diocese of Shanghai received the Pope's letter with enthusiasm and is adhering to the letter's objectives. The Bishop expressed regret that some in the underground Catholic Church had not given immediate support to the Pope's letter. He suggested that some overseas persons might not support reconciliation of the two factions. Even so, today (May 24) the whole Catholic world is praying for the Catholic Church in China. He noted that a nun in the diocese has taken a group of visiting German Bishops to say Mass for a large gathering at Sheshan (site of one of the diocese's seminaries and home to a mountaintop cathedral; Sheshan is a pilgrimage destination for Chinese Catholics in May).

18. (U) Rep. James Sensenbrenner asked Bishop Jin's views on religious freedom in China. The United States has always been an advocate for religious freedom. Considering developments over the last five years, did the Bishop find that he and the

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Church are able to accomplish the Church's mission with fewer restrictions than in the past? Bishop Jin replied that he is very satisfied about the extent of religious freedom in China today. His views are further explicated in the book passed to delegation members, and the ability to publish such a book in China, and to establish and operate two seminaries, are excellent examples of the degree of free speech and freedom of religion that the Catholic Church in China now holds. Over the last 25 years, the Shanghai Diocese's two seminaries have formed more than 400 young priests. He had been able to send his Vicar General to Rome four years ago, where he met the Pope. The diocese did not have sufficient financial ability to send seminarians to Rome, though they would surely be thrilled if they had opportunity to go there.

19. (U) Having heard the Bishop outline when he entered the Jesuits in China and when he studied in Rome, Rep. Markey asked whether Bishop Jin had ever met the Jesuit priest and scientist Father Teilhard de Chardin. Bishop Jin replied yes, they had met three times: in 1942, in Beijing; later in Shanghai, where de Chardin gave a scientific lecture that Jin did not well understand; and later again, in Paris. De Chardin had told Jin that Jin was at least five years behind in his scientific thinking, Jin said, but had treated him kindly, warmly, encouragingly. Rome also did not understand de Chardin, Bishop Jin continued, and sadly he was 'exiled' to New York. There he died on an Easter Sunday, and only ten persons went to graveside for his interment.

10. (U) Rep. Markey followed up, asking the Bishop to outline his dream for Catholicism in China. In the long run, Bishop Jin replied, I am very optimistic, but in the short-term, I must be realistic. The numbers of Catholic believers in Shanghai and in China are growing very slowly. Prior to 1949, more than 3

million persons in China were Catholics. Today there are very few, a small minority in Shanghai despite Catholicism's arrival here just over four hundred years ago. Only God knows the number of Catholics in China today, with the Chinese Government putting the number at six million, Hong Kong experts estimating the number at 10 million, and some in the United States estimating the number as high as 14 million. In contrast, Protestants, who numbered about 700,000 when the Communists came to power in 1949, now number about 30 million (Chinese Government estimate). Catholicism is much behind the Protestants. But the atmosphere for gaining religious adherents in China now is very favorable. Young people very much wish to learn about the West, including about religion and especially about Christianity. Protestants and Catholics are brothers and sisters, the Bishop emphasized. He expressed approval for the ecumenical movement, and wondered whether bishops might be responsible for the low number of Chinese Catholics today.

¶11. (U) Rep. Blumenauer asked about Shanghai Diocese projects, such as renovation of St. Ignatius Cathedral. Bishop Jin replied that the diocese has 146 churches and two seminaries now. A diocesan publishing house has published more than 400 titles already, while a Catholic Social Work Center has been established to implement charitable activities for Caritas, the Catholic relief, development and social service organization. The diocese has built about ten primary schools in rural areas, and has contributed to relief work in Sichuan Province following the devastating May 12, 2008 earthquake there. The publishing house, with the donation of paper arranged by the Protestant United Bible Society, had printed one million copies of the New Testament in modern Chinese (a translation prepared by the Bishop himself, he said) and distributed these to poorer dioceses. Coming back to his ecumenical theme, he noted that the Presbyterian Church had provided scholarships for Chinese Catholic nuns to study in England and Scotland, showing that all Christians are brothers and sisters. The Bishop also gratefully acknowledged assistance received from Jesuits in the United States.

¶12. (U) Rep. Jackie Speier recalled from reading about Bishop Jin that he had been described as having entered prison as a young man and having emerged as an old man. What kept him going

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through his long years of imprisonment? Bishop Jin explained that he had been arrested in 1955, and through the years moved through a series of prisons, in Shanghai, Beijing, Hebei Province, and Henan Province. All told, he was confined for 27 years, 18 in prison and 9 in labor camps. He very thankfully credited the reforms launched by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s as having led to his release from prison (in 1982), otherwise he would still be in prison - or already in heaven. While in jail, he had no physical freedom, but his mind was free. He could frequently pray in silence to God, recite the entire Mass silently, and say the Rosary. Because of his faith, he was not unhappy in prison. Now outside of prison, he finds himself very busy. Despite his age, he is still serving as Bishop. He has less time to pray to God now, a cause for regret. He described himself as one not born for administrative work, that his true calling was more likely to teach theology.

¶13. (U) In closing, Speaker Pelosi said Bishop Jin inspired her delegation and honored them by meeting with them. She reiterated that she would convey the Bishop's good wishes and book to the President, as well as conveying his greetings to Cardinals McCarrick and Keeler. On behalf of her delegation, she presented U.S. Capitol bookends to the Bishop, which he accepted with thanks. Bishop Jin reiterated his praise for the American people and for the Catholic Church in America, admiringly noting how the numbers of American Catholics had grown from such a small number at the founding of the United States to about 70 million at present. Catholics remain a small minority in Shanghai more than 400 years after Catholicism

reached the city. The Catholic Church in the United States - Jesuits, Maryknolls and others, have been very generous to the Diocese of Shanghai. A new era, one of hope for all, has dawned for the United States and the whole world, the Bishop concluded.

¶14. (U) U.S. Participants

Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Mr. Paul Pelosi

Rep. Edward Markey and Dr. Susan Blumenthal

Rep. James Sensenbrenner and Mrs. Cheryl Sensenbrenner

Rep. Earl Blumenauer and son Jon Blumenauer

Rep. Jackie Speier

Acting United States Consul General in Shanghai Simon Schuchat

Professional Staff Members to the Speaker and Representatives

Christopher Beede, Consulate Political and Economic Section
Chief (note taker)

Fu Helei, Consulate Senior Political Assistant

Fei Yuying, Consulate Interpreter

¶15. (U) Chinese Participants

The Most Reverend Aloysius JIN Luxian, Bishop of Shanghai

Ambassador LI Zhaoxing, Chairman of National People's Congress
Foreign Affairs Committee

Ambassador ZHOU Wenzhong, Chinese Ambassador to the United States

HU Wei, Vice Chairman of Shanghai MPC Standing Committee

The Most Reverend Joseph XING Wenzhi, Auxiliary Bishop of
Shanghai

The Most Reverend AI Zuzhang, Vicar General of the Diocese of
Shanghai

Mr. PENG Fang, Foreign Affairs Office, National People's Congress

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Other officials from the Diocese of Shanghai, Shanghai Municipal
People's Congress, National People's Congress and the Shanghai
Religious Affairs Bureau

¶16. (U) Speaker Pelosi's staff have cleared this report.
SCHUCHAT